

Appl. No. 09/742,229  
Notel Docket Number 11958ROUS01U  
Attorney Docket No. 123-005

## AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS.

This listing of the claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of the claims  
in this application:

1. (Canceled)
2. (Canceled)
3. (Canceled)
4. (Canceled)
5. (Canceled)
6. (Canceled)
7. (Canceled)
8. (Canceled)
9. (Canceled)
10. (Canceled)
11. (Canceled)
12. (Canceled)
13. (Canceled)
14. (Canceled)
15. (Canceled)

Appl. No. 09/742,229  
Nortel Docket Number 11958ROUS01U  
Attorney Docket No. 123-005

16. (Canceled)
17. (Canceled)
18. (Canceled)
19. (Canceled)
20. (Canceled)
21. (Canceled)
22. (Canceled)
23. (Canceled)
24. (Canceled)
25. (Canceled)
26. (Canceled)
27. (Canceled)
28. (Canceled)
29. (Canceled)
30. (Canceled)
31. (Canceled)
32. (Canceled)
33. (Canceled)
34. (Canceled)
35. (Canceled)

Appl. No. 09/742,229  
Nortel Docket Number 11958ROUS01U  
Attorney Docket No. 123-005

36. (New) At a source node, a method of data switching comprising:

receiving data segments, each of said data segments belonging to a data stream from among a plurality of data streams;

writing said each of said data segments in a payload memory device;

selecting a particular data stream from among said data streams for transmission by said source node; and

if there is at least one data segment in said payload memory device belonging to said particular data stream:

assigning to said particular data stream a current output channel from among a plurality of output channels, said current output channel being selected to provide equitable distribution of said particular data stream across the plurality of output channels;

enqueueing a selected data segment belonging to said particular data stream in a buffer associated with said current output channel; and

transmitting said selected data segment over said current output channel.

37. (New) The method of claim 36 wherein said step of selecting said particular data stream is based on a bit-rate allocation to each of said data streams.

38. (New) The method of claim 37 including a further step of determining said bit-rate allocation according to a process of admission-control of each of said data streams.

39. (New) The method of claim 36 wherein said current output channel has a logical relationship to said previous output channel.

Appl. No. 09/742,229  
Nortel Docket Number 11958ROUS01U  
Attorney Docket No. 123-005

40. (New) The method of claim 39 wherein said logical relationship is an adjacency relationship.
41. (New) The method of claim 36 wherein said current output channel and said previous output channel are specific to said particular data stream.
42. (New) The method of claim 36 including a further step of associating each of said data streams in said plurality of data streams with a sink node from among a plurality of sink nodes.
43. (New) A source node comprising:
- a plurality of input ports;
  - a plurality of output ports;
  - a payload memory device for storing data segments received from said plurality of input ports, each of said data segments associated with one of a plurality of predefined data streams;
  - a first memory device logically partitioned into primary queues each of said primary queues associated with one of said predefined data streams and holding addresses in said payload memory of data segments belonging to said one of said predefined data streams;
  - a second memory device logically partitioned into secondary queues, each of said secondary queues associated with an output port from among said plurality of output ports;

Appl. No. 09/742,229  
Nortel Docket Number 11958ROUS01U  
Attorney Docket No. 123-005

a first controller for regulating transfer of selected addresses from said primary queues to said second memory device; and

a second controller for equitably distributing said selected addresses among selected secondary queues.

44. (New) The source node of claim 43 wherein each of said secondary queues is associated with an output port from among said plurality of output ports.

45. (New) The source node of claim 43 wherein said payload memory device is a common-memory device operable to store data segments belonging to each of said predefined data streams.

46. (New) The source node of claim 43 wherein said first controller is a service-rate controller operable to:

receive bit-rate allocations, one bit-rate allocation for each of said predefined data streams, from a service-quality controller performing a function of admission control of said predefined data streams;

select a particular primary queue from among said primary queues based on said bit-rate allocations; and

determine an instant of time for transferring a data segment from said particular primary queue.

47. (New) The source node of claim 43 wherein said service-quality controller frequently updates said bit-rate allocations for said predefined data streams.

48. (New) The source node of claim 43 wherein said second controller distributes said

Appl. No. 09/742,229  
Nortel Docket Number 11958ROUS01U  
Attorney Docket No. 123-005

selected addresses among said selected secondary queues so that a subset of said selected addresses belonging to any of said primary queues is distributed equitably among said selected secondary queues.

49. (New) The source node of claim 43 wherein said second controller is operable to:

associate a current secondary queue from among said plurality of secondary queues with each primary queue in said plurality of primary queues; and  
update said current secondary queue associated with said each primary queue when a data segment is transferred from said each primary queue.

50. (New) The source node of claim 44 wherein each of output ports associated with said selected secondary queues transmits signals over a wavelength channel in a wavelength-division-multiplexed link.

51. (New) The source node of claim 43 further including an output interface for transmitting data segments from said payload memory device over said wavelength-division-multiplexed link, said particular data segments determined by addresses in said selected secondary queues.

52. (New) A network comprising:

a plurality of source nodes;  
a first plurality of cross connectors;  
a plurality of core nodes;  
a second plurality of cross connectors;  
a plurality of sink nodes; and

Appl. No. 09/742,229  
Nortel Docket Number 11958ROUS01U  
Attorney Docket No. 123-005

a plurality of multi-channel links connecting said source nodes to said first plurality of cross connectors, said first plurality of cross connectors to said core nodes, said core nodes to said second plurality of cross connectors, and said second plurality of cross connectors to said sink nodes;

wherein said first plurality of cross connectors is configurable to provide multi-channel paths from each of said source nodes to at least one of said core nodes;  
and

wherein each of said source nodes sends data streams to at least one of said sink nodes and regulates the bit rate of each of said data streams;  
and

wherein each of said source nodes divides data of each of said data streams equitably among channels of a selected multi-channel path.

53. (New) The network of claim 52 wherein at least one of said core nodes includes a plurality of parallel switch planes, each of said switch planes connecting to a single channel from each of a selected subset of said multi-channel paths.

54. (New) The network of claim 53 wherein said second plurality of cross connectors is configurable to provide multi-channel paths from each of said core nodes to at least one of said sink nodes.

55. (New) The network of claim 52 further including at least one multi-channel link directly connecting at least one of said source nodes to at least one of said core nodes, thereby bypassing said first plurality of cross connectors.

Appl. No. 09/742,229  
Nortel Docket Number 11958ROUS01U  
Attorney Docket No. 123-005

56. (New) The network of claim 53 wherein each of said switch planes has its own scheduler for scheduling transfer of data across said each of said switch planes.

57. (New) The network of claim 53 wherein at least one of said switch planes includes an optical switch.

58. (New) A source node having a plurality of multi-channel links connecting to core nodes in a network, each of said links comprising a respective plurality of channels, said source node operable to:

retain, in a control table, an identifier of a last-used channel in each of said multi-channel links for each data stream from among a plurality of data streams originating from said source node;

receive a data unit belonging to a particular data stream from among said data streams;

select a particular multi-channel link from among said plurality of multi-channel links according to a desired distribution of data streams over the plurality of multi-channel links;

ascertain, using said control table, a particular last-used channel by said particular data stream in said particular multi-channel link; and

transmit said data unit over a particular channel in said particular multi-channel link, said particular channel bearing a logical relationship to said particular last-used channel.

59. (New) The source node of claim 58 wherein said logical relationship is an adjacency relationship determined according to a round-robin selection process of channels of said particular multi-channel link.



Appl. No. 09/742,229  
Nortel Docket Number 11958ROUS01U  
Attorney Docket No. 123-005

60. (New) The source node of claim 58 further operable to determine, for each multi-channel link in said plurality of multi-channel links:

a first merit index based on a known propagation delay along said each multi-channel link, said first merit index having a first upper bound corresponding to a lowest propagation delay;

a second merit index determined based a current vacancy of said each multi-channel link, said second merit index having a second upper bound corresponding to full vacancy in said multi-channel link; and

a composite merit index determined as a sum of said first merit index and said second merit index.

61. (New) The source node of claim 60 further operable to select said particular multi-channel link according to said composite merit index of said each multi-channel link.